

SMOKE SIGNALS

Volume 42/Number 10 August/September 2010



Administration's Message

Dear Residents:

I hope you all are enjoying your summer and had time to vacation somewhere or relax at home. Although the weather has been hot and wet, our Village has managed to get by without any major weather related emergencies. From all reports, IHP fared pretty well in comparison to some other communities (like Westchester) during the heavy rainfall on July 23-24. Soon, the children will be back in school and life will settle down to a more predictable routine. Your VBT has been busy with budget and finance matters and held a very successful special Townhall meeting on July 15th. The VBT has made a major decision to seek voter approval at the November 2, 2010 election for IHP to become a home rule community. More about this below.

First, on behalf of the residents of the Village of Indian Head Park, I want to congratulate the residents of Countryside and Mayor Rob Conrad and his Board and staff on their 50th Anniversary this year. As a sister community in the larger family of communities surrounding IHP, Countryside's happy occasion is cause for celebration by all! We wish them our best!

On Monday September 6, 2010, we will observe Labor Day. In 1894, Congress designated the first Monday of September as the day for national observance of Labor Day. "It is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity and well-being of our country." Have a happy Labor Day and remember our men and women in the Armed Forces around the world by flying our Flag as they labor to protect all of us!!

Also, I want to congratulate **Trustees Matt Walsh and Carol Coleman, Village Clerk Joe Consolo, and Pleasantview Fire Chief Dan Hermes** on their re-appointments to the Village's E-911 Board. In addition, congratulations are in order for the following re-appointments: **Thomas Anselmo** to the Fire/Police Commission and **Dr. Martin Shobris** as Health Officer. It is fitting that we recognize them and every one of our Village volunteers who serve on our boards, commissions, and associations for the time and effort they spend on our behalf! Thank you!

Turning to our Village finances, at the August Board meeting, the VBT unanimously approved a Resolution to place a public question concerning whether IHP should become a **home rule municipality** on the ballot for the November 2, 2010 election.

This is a major step for the Village and the decision to seek "home rule" for IHP was made after careful deliberation and discussion among the VBT and with our residents at the Townhall meeting. In the last Smoke Signals, I discussed in detail the state of the Village's finances, the budget deficit of \$125,000 and the steps we had taken to alleviate the deficit as much as possible. You can read more of the details in the Smoke Signals and VBT meeting minutes on line at our website www.indianheadpark-il.gov.

The purpose of the Townhall meeting was to brief everyone on the challenges facing our Village due to the downturn in the economy and potential ramifications from actions that may be taken by the State to address its budget problems. There were about 65 residents in attendance at the Townhall meeting who asked questions and provided interesting input. Based on feed back I have received from these residents, we accomplished our goal of setting forth where we are financially, how we got there, and what we needed to do going forward. Further discussion of home rule took place at the August 12th VBT meeting also with resident input. One of the many good suggestions that came from the residents was that we should explain what home rule is. I will attempt to do that here and in the time leading to the November election.

The discussion regarding home rule must start with the understanding that IHP is a "non-home rule" community. As a non-home rule community, we are limited in what we can do to regulate activities in the Village or to raise revenues and then only after getting voter approval of a referendum at a general election. These elections happen three times in every two year period. Thus, there is no flexibility for local government to act on short notice to address the needs of the residents. For example, if the State reduces our local share of income tax revenues, it would take at least 2 years for the Village to make that loss up through a property tax increase which could only happen after placing the matter on the ballot for a general election and receiving the money assuming the residents approved the tax referendum. This could require the Village to borrow money to make up the short-fall and cost us, over time, not only the loss of revenue from the State but also the interest on the loan. In the meantime, infrastructure may further deteriorate, services may be cut, and opportunities to participate in grants would likely be lost.

Home rule municipalities, on the other hand, are not stymied in this manner. Becoming a home rule community will allow the VBT to meet unexpected challenges and to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities (e.g. grant money, low

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interest loans) quickly and decisively for our common good. By becoming a home rule municipality, IHP would have the ability to timely tailor legislation to specifically address a local need, problem, or concern. There would be an increased ability to regulate activities in the areas of economic development, building, zoning, sanitation, nuisance, civil disturbance, public health, and safety and welfare. Significantly, we would have the ability to enhance revenues through locally administered taxes rather than solely through property taxes.

A little background is necessary to start the discussion about "**home rule**." First, the authority to act held by non-home rule communities comes from the Illinois General Assembly. A local problem cannot be addressed by a non-home rule municipality unless the power was granted by the General Assembly. Obviously, they are busy trying to run the State. Our local State Senator and Representative are one of many others in the same office who are focused on State matters and those of their constituents.

In contrast, **home rule** authority comes from the 1970 Illinois State Constitution. Section 6 of Article VII provides that home rule units of government can exercise and perform independently from or concurrently with the state any power or function pertaining to the municipality's affairs subject to only certain restrictions specifically enacted by the State. Also, that section states that powers and functions of the home rule unit shall be construed in favor of the home rule municipality. The presumption in "non-home rule" units is to deny governmental authority not specifically granted by the Illinois General Assembly. This doctrine of denying authority to act to non-home rule communities, also called "Dillon's Rule" (named after a court case where the doctrine was articulated) has hindered our Village in dealing with financial issues caused by the current downturn in the economy.

For example, recently, a business in IHP was renting spaces for overnight parking to trucks. This increased the truck traffic and, of course, increased the wear and tear on the road used to get to the parking. This in turn has the affect

of increasing the deterioration of the road that we (you and I) have to maintain and the costs associated with that. The Village, because it is **non-home** rule, had no authority to raise revenue by enacting a fee for the overnight parking to help offset the added cost to the Village for maintaining that street whereas a **home rule** community could have done so. This matter has been resolved for now on zoning and business licensing grounds but it underscores how significant home rule authority would be for IHP. As a home rule community, IHP could perhaps have raised revenue from this activity.

Other examples of home rule authority include: regulations to eliminate deteriorating housing; control local sources of pollution above state standards; and economic development/redevelopment programs including facade enhancement and property acquisition and disposition. Home rule enhances the municipality's ability to raise revenues while maintaining the accountability of local elected officials.

A home rule municipality can impose locally administered taxes and fees and often does so without total reliance on property taxes. This benefits all residents in the community. Some examples of the types of additional revenue include home rule sales tax; municipal use tax, gasoline tax, liquor tax, and amusement tax. Significantly, a home rule municipality may legally incur general obligation indebtedness for a proper corporate purpose without prior referendum approval and at a lower interest rate. This means having the authority and flexibility to act quickly to address shortfalls like a loss of State revenue sharing or to take advantage of an opportunity to receive grant money. Moreover, local ordinances are effective almost immediately. Finally, local elected officials are directly accountable to the voters of IHP at elections held every two years.

A criticism of home rule is that it will result in higher property taxes. This is NOT TRUE according to a survey conducted by NIU in 2002. Home rule authority leads to LOWER

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Smoke Signals

Newsletter Coordinator, Kathy Leach
(708) 246-7099, extension 101
kleach@indianheadpark-il.gov

Volume 42, Number 10

Circulation 2000

Smoke Signals is published by the Village of Indian Head Park to inform its residents of present activities in the village and the ever-growing plans for the future in the pursuit of better government and good citizenship.

Teepee Topics news items should be submitted to the Newsletter Coordinator at the Municipal Offices.

Full page advertisements - \$200.00, 1/2 page advertisements - \$125.00, 3 1/2" x 3 1/2" size advertisements - \$75.00, business card size advertisements - \$45.00, trading post advertisements - \$20.00 (no commercial advertisements - the advertisement will run two times at no cost, then a \$20.00 charge).

Extra copies and back issues (up to one year) of *Smoke Signals* can be obtained at the Village Hall.

Deadline date for the next issue is September 24, 2010.

www.indianheadpark-il.gov

VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK

201 Acacia Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525
(708) 246-3080
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Anne Bermier Matthew P. Walsh II

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**Chief of Police/
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Emergency 9-1-1

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property taxes by allowing home rule communities to diversify the tax base through reliance on less onerous sources of tax revenue and by raising some revenue from non-residents. On average State-wide, all cities and villages derive about 25% to 30% of their revenues from property taxes while home rule communities derive 10% to 20% of their revenue from property taxes. Currently, non-home rule IHP obtains about 28% of its revenue through property taxes. Thus, if IHP became a home rule community, our ability to raise revenues without resorting solely to property taxes would be greatly enhanced.

Needed revenues could be raised from a combination of sources and not totally from property taxes. Home rule communities are NOT allowed to tax earnings, income and occupations.

Becoming a home rule municipality does not mean the elimination of property taxes. It means that the Village revenues from property taxes can be supplemented by revenue from other sources paid in part by non-residents. The effect is to hold down any property tax increases. At the townhall meeting, several handouts were distributed. Some were intended to show the impact on property taxes to raise a specific amount of revenue. This assumed that IHP remained a non-home rule community and that the needed revenue could only be raised by increasing property taxes. To raise just \$100,000 more in revenue, the tax increase to a home-

owner for a house with a market value of \$100,000 would be \$27.28. A house with a market value of 5 times more would pay 5 times the \$27.28. This is a "worst case" scenario before any homeowner/senior exemption/freezes were factored in. The significant benefit of home rule is that the VBT would have the ability to raise this revenue through a combination of sources such as, for example, 50% from property tax and 50% from other sources.

Home rule gives local municipalities wide and flexible powers. Significantly, several studies have shown that home rule leads to LOWER property taxes by allowing home rule municipalities to diversify their tax base and rely more on alternative sources of revenue. This result occurs in **home rule** communities where they have used their broader powers to raise revenue in a manner more acceptable to local residents than a system based heavily on the use of property tax revenue as is the case in a **non-home** rule community. IHP is non-home rule but you will have the opportunity to change that at the election this November. More on this to follow! We will hold another townhall meeting on **home rule** in the latter half of October on a date to be determined.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Respectfully,

Richard S. Andrews, mayor

Public Works Announcement

Oak Wilt Disease

All oaks are susceptible to oak wilt. However, the red oak subgenus (red, black, Hill's, pin, and scarlet) is more susceptible to oak wilt than the white oaks subgenus (white, burr, English, swamp, white, and chinkapin). Trees in the red oak group usually die quite rapidly, often within weeks or months after infection. Trees in the white oak group typically develop symptoms more slowly, showing branch dieback for years before dying. In some cases, white and burr oaks recover after one year of infection. Oak Wilt Disease has been found in several locations of the Village.

Disease Development

The fungus, invades the water conducting tissues (xylem) and induces the tree to clog its own vessels, preventing the normal flow of water. This causes the foliage to wilt and, frequently, tree death. Oak wilt can spread from infected trees to healthy trees through root grafts between nearby oaks and by insects that carry spores of the fungus from one tree to another. **Root Grafts.** Trees of the same species, and sometimes same subgenus, growing within 50 feet one another, may graft together and share the same vascular system. This "network" of roots allows the disease to move freely from one tree to the next, usually within a one-to-six year period, causing a whole stand of trees to become infected. Insects As a tree in the red oak subgenus begins to die, the oak wilt fungus produces green-gray patches (called fungal mats) between the spawood and bark of the trunk or large branches of a tree. These fungal mats push apart weakened bark and produce a fruity odor and sticky sap attracts sap-feeding insects, especially picnic beetles and bark beetles move from

infected trees, carrying spores from the fungal mats to fresh wounds on healthy trees. **Symptoms and Diagnosis. Red oak subgenus.** In red oaks, the spread of the disease can be rapid, with wilt symptoms starting at the top of the tree and progressing inward and downward on the lateral branches within a few weeks.

Complete leaf drop usually occurs by the middle of summer. Symptoms in white oak trees is similar to those in red oaks, but it spreads more slowly and appears localized on individual branches. There is no control of oak wilt, but the disease can be managed by preventing its spread by minimizing pruning and removing infected trees. For further details regarding Oak Wilt Disease, please contact the Public Works Department at (708) 246-1233.

Scheduled Meeting Dates

Village Board of Trustees 7:30 p.m.:

Thursday, September 9, 2010

Planning and Zoning Commission 7:30 p.m.:

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

Fire/Police Commission 7:00 p.m.:

Thursday, September 2, 2010: 7:00 p.m.

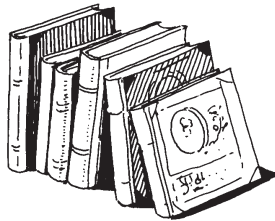
E-911 Board 6:30 p.m.:

No meetings scheduled at this time.

All meetings are held at the Municipal Facility at 201 Acacia Drive. All residents are welcomed!

Heritage Center Library Annual Book Sale

The annual book sale will be held at the Indian Head Park Heritage Center, at 6250 Wolf Road on Saturday, October 16, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All proceeds to benefit the Heritage Center. Paperback books will be sold for 25 cents each and hard cover books at \$1.00 and up. If you have any questions, please contact Jane Kuhn at (708) 246-0293.



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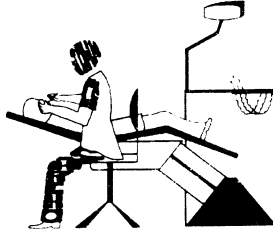
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TEEPEE TOPICS

Congratulations to Chara Dubin who made the dean's list earning a GPA of 3.89 out of a possible 4.0. She is enrolled in the Professional School of Pharmacy Doctorate Program at Purdue University.

Our condolences to the family and friends of the following residents from Indian Head Park who passed away: Fred Ploegman who was a World War II U.S. Army Veteran with 2 Purple Hearts, he was a Superintendent of Parks and Recreation for Berwyn for 15 years and for LaGrange for 22 years, he was a Charter Member of the Board of Directors for Aging Care Connections of LaGrange and a member of the Illinois Basketball Hall of Fame. Delores Duda, age 81, who was a retired officer manager. Susan Zogata, age 52,

who was an employee of Rush University Medical Center Department of Neurosurgery for over 30 years. Andrew Bochnovic, age 84, who was a World War II and Korean War Veteran of the United States Navy, he served as President of the Leisure Men's Club and was active at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church.

"A River Thru History – the Des Plaines Valley Rendezvous" will be held on September 11th and September 12th in Columbia Woods Forest Preserve from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Further details regarding the events planned for that date, may be obtained at www.ariverthruhistory.com

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